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SUBJECT: SWEDEN SUPPORTS RAPID DRAWDOWN OF OHR AND ALTHEA IN BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA

In an April 3 meeting with visiting EUR/ERA political officer Steve Dyokas, Swedish MFA EU Affairs Deputy Director Lars Schmidt, Deputy Director of the International Security Policy Department Carl-Magnus Ericsson, and MoD representative to the MFA Brigadier General Gunnar Karlsson made the following points about Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Office of the High Representative (OHR), and the EUFOR/ALTHEA military operation.

-- Sweden believes that no military objectives remain in BiH and that ALTHEA should be drawn down. "No military tasks remain" BGEN Karlsson stressed, and "just being there is not a task." With a growing number of Member States sharing this view, identifying a clear purpose for the continued EU military presence will be required. As troop drawdowns continue the justification for maintaining ALTHEA's link with OHR is becoming increasingly unclear, interlocutors added.

-- Instead, the question is whether a reinforced police mission might not be more suited to the task. The April 2 PSC discussion in Brussels supported "prudent planning" for downsizing the mission.

-- Sweden withdrew its troops from BiH in April 2008. Today there is one political advisor and one civilian police officer present.

-- Although there is no EU consensus yet, there is a growing opinion among Member States that the economic crisis makes it difficult to maintain troops. National withdrawals from ALTHEA will likely continue, laying the groundwork for a potentially precarious situation.

-- Paradoxically our interlocutors admitted that ALTHEA should continue until the 5+2 benchmarks for OHR closure are met, but they argued that good progress has already been made and that the international community cannot afford to wait for a "perfect situation".

-- The 5+2 benchmarks have almost been met and it is time to focus on a civilian process. Follow-on security measures under the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) would, according to the Swedes, benefit from a UN Security Council resolution.

-- In addition, the Swedes are looking to quickly dismantle the OHR so that the Bosnians can learn to "stand on their own two feet". For too long, BiH has been confounded by too many conditions. "We cannot babysit for too long," said Schmidt. "It's time for real ownership."

-- The Swedes want to have closer consultations with the U.S. as they draw near their EU presidency, July - December 2009.

SILVERMAN